

In the claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An automated prescription dispensing system comprising:

a patient interface having a data interface configured for entering information correlated to the patient and a receptacle through which medication is dispensed;

a dispenser disposed in communication with the patient interface portion for holding and dispensing medication, the dispenser comprising a plurality of receiving slots, each of the receiving slots being configured for holding one or more prescriptions associated with a patient; and

a controller in communication with the dispensing portion for selectively controlling the dispensing of medication from the dispenser, the controller being configured to dispense all of the prescriptions in one of the receiving slots disposed in the dispensing portion in response to information correlated to the patient.

2. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 1, wherein the data interface comprises a keyboard.

3. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 1, wherein the data interface comprises a magnetic card reader.

4. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 1, wherein the patient interface further comprises a display screen.

5. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 1, wherein the patient interface further comprises a speaker.

6. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 1, wherein the patient interface further comprises a printer.

7. (Currently Amended) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 1, wherein the dispenser comprises a plurality of medication receiving slots, at least one of the medication receiving slots holding a plurality of different prescriptions for a single patient.

8. (Currently Amended) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 7, wherein the dispenser comprises at least one door disposed adjacent each receiving slot for selectively controlling the passage of medication out of that receiving slot and through the dispenser.

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9. (Currently Amended) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 8, wherein ~~the at least one door comprises~~ further comprising an access door associated with each receiving slot for selectively preventing placement of medication into ~~the~~ that receiving slot.

10. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 8, wherein the at least one door comprises a dispensing door for selectively releasing medication from the receiving slot.

11. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 7, further comprising a plurality of sensors for determining the presence of medication within the plurality of receiving slots.

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12. (Currently Amended) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 7, wherein the controller is configured to track the location of the patient's medication disposed in one of the plurality of receiving slots by patient information.

13. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 1, wherein the control comprises a data interface for entering information about each prescription loaded into the dispenser.

14. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 13, wherein the data interface comprises a keyboard.

15. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 13, wherein the date interface comprises a scanner.

16. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 1, wherein the controller comprises a processor programed to record information regarding the location of medications labeled for a particular patient within the dispenser.

17. (Original) The automated prescription dispensing system of claim 1, wherein the controller further comprises a communications interface for communicating with remote locations.

05 18. (Currently Amended) A method for automated prescription dispensing comprising:
filling a prescription by obtaining a container with medication therein and applying a label
containing patient information;
loading the prescription into a dispenser; and
dispensing the prescription to a the patient in response to input of data correlated to the
patient.

19. (Original) The method according to claim 18, wherein method comprises placing the prescription into a receiving slot of a dispenser having a plurality of receiving slots disposed therein.

20. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 19, wherein the method comprises correlating a receiving slot in which the prescription is placed with information regarding the patient prior to access by the patient.

21. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 20, further comprising releasing ~~the prescription~~ a plurality of prescriptions from a receiving slot in the dispenser in response to input of data correlated to the patient.

22. (Original) The method accord to claim 18, wherein the method comprises dispensing the prescription after the patient has entered a personal identification number.

23. (Currently Amended) A method for dispensing medication from a dispenser having a plurality of receiving slots, the method comprising:

opening an available receiving slot;

inputting patient information regarding a prescription;

disposing the prescription in the receiving slot;

closing the receiving slot; and

dispensing the prescription from the receiving slot to a patient for whom the patient information was entered.

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24. (Canceled) A method for verifying a refill prescription, the method comprising:
obtaining information regarding a prescription to be refilled;
determining whether a new refill exceeds an authorized number of refills; and
sending an electronic inquiry to a doctor requesting an authorization to fill a refill prescription
which exceeds the authorized number of refills.

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25. (Canceled) The method according to claim 24, wherein the method further comprises
receiving an electronic authorization confirmation from a doctor.

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26. (Canceled) The method according to claim 25, further comprising filling the prescription
in response to the electronic authorization confirmation.

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27. (Canceled) The method according to claim 24, wherein the method further comprises
receiving an electronic denial of confirmation and generating instructions for a patient to contact the
doctor.

28. (Currently Amended) A method for billing prescriptions, the method comprising:
filling a prescription, including labeling a container of medicine with patient information;
loading the prescription into an automated dispensing system;
dispensing the prescription to a patient in response to information correlated to the patient;

and

generating a bill responsive to dispensing of the prescription.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for more efficiently filling prescriptions, the method comprising:

collecting information for a plurality of prescriptions at a central processing location;
filling the prescriptions, including applying patient information to a medicament container;

and

transporting the prescriptions to a plurality of local pharmacies.

30. (Original) The method according to claim 29, wherein the method comprises receiving prescription information at local pharmacies and relaying the information to the central processing location.

31. (Original) The method according to claim 29, wherein the method comprises organizing the prescriptions into groups based on the medication prescribed and filling the prescriptions by group.

32. (Original) The method according to claim 29, further comprising loading the prescriptions into an automated dispensing system at the local pharmacy.

33. (New) A method for automated prescription dispensing comprising:
filling a plurality of prescriptions for a patient;
loading the plurality of prescriptions into a receiving slot of a dispenser; and
dispensing the plurality of prescriptions to the patient in response to input of data correlated to the patient.

34. (New) The method according to claim 33, wherein the method further comprises using a sensor to ensure that all of the prescriptions in the receiving slot were dispensed to the patient.

35. (New) The method according to claim 33, wherein the method comprises having a door which selectively holds the prescriptions in the receiving slot and opening the door to release the prescriptions from the receiving slot.

36 (New) A method for dispensing medication from a dispenser having a plurality of receiving slots, the method comprising:

selecting an receiving slot;

placing a container containing a prescribed medication in the receiving slot; and

dispensing the container from the receiving slot to a patient such that the prescription includes

patient information thereon.

37. (New) The method for dispensing medication according to claim 36, wherein the method comprises selecting a first receiving slot and disposing a first prescription labeled for a first patient in the first receiving slot, selecting a second receiving slot and disposing a second prescription labeled for a second patient in the second receiving slot and selectively dispensing the first prescription and the second prescription to the first patient and the second patient.
